

has a downturn. Have our policy-makers who have outlined a free-trade policy for the United States supposedly with a deep intellectual base really been right when the effect of their policy is to handcuff the United States to Third World nations in deep water that do not know how to swim? That is what we have done.

If we have lost our independence and if we now are committed to bail out every nation which becomes inextricably linked with our economic well-being through our trade policies, is that smart?

Regardless of whether or not you like the trend lines on the exports and the imports, is it right for us to give up our independence and link ourselves with these nations? Does that mean we are now going to link ourselves with Argentina, we are so linked that we now have to bail them out if they have a problem, or any of the other dozens and dozens of Third World nations which now will call on the United States to help bail them out because we have a substantial trade relationship?

Now, let me just conclude by giving one "I told you so" and "Let's look at this thing in the future," to all of my colleagues, my good friends, who supported NAFTA. The claim by the pro-NAFTA advocates on this floor was that Mexican workers were going to achieve a larger standard of living, go above that \$1,900 per capita per year income, and they were going to get up there to the point where they were making enough money to buy large amounts of American consumer goods and increase our exports. This devaluation has decreased the capability to buy by about 30 percent. This proves that NAFTA was wrong.

OIL AS COLLATERAL

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. HASTINGS of Washington). Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from Ohio [Ms. KAPTUR] is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. KAPTUR. Mr. Speaker, I want to compliment the previous speaker, the gentleman from California [Mr. HUNTER], who has been so much a part of our efforts to really open up international trade and explain the consequences to people in this country and abroad.

I rise tonight with a rather heavy heart because of the action of the Clinton administration. Our Government is not a monarchy. We are a nation of laws and of balance of powers between this legislative branch, which is the first branch that the Constitution mentions, and the action, in my opinion, by the Clinton administration in extending over \$47 billion worth of credit from the taxpayers of this country is outside the constitutional boundaries of the executive branch.

Now, Wall Street today and their irresponsible money men are cheering, because they essentially have been bailed out along with their 24 billion-

aire friends in Mexico with this gift package from the taxpayers of the United States of America with no vote by Members of this Congress. Wall Street investors have every reason to be happy. They got their money back from you, the taxpayers, but the American people should know that they are at risk, because this deal is backed up by worthless paper certificates of oil serving as collateral.

Now, why do I say this? Does not oil have value? Under normal circumstances, it would. But the Mexican Government has long used its oil over and over, the same oil again, as collateral for debts they already owe.

Did you know that Mexico has already pledged its oil in the European bond market, the Euro-bond market, for upwards of \$10 billion? The fact is Mexican oil no longer has any value for use as collateral on new debt, because it is pledged to old debt, and Mexico owes anywhere between, on the public debt it owes, between \$160 billion and \$200 billion.

It would be almost better for Mexico to pledge jumping beans rather than to repledge their oil again.

In the RECORD tonight I have taken out of Moody's Manual a list of where Mexico's monopoly-owned, state-owned oil company, Pemex, has already pledged the assets of their oil company.

Suffice it to say, all the administration accomplished by conditioning new loans, these \$47 billion worth of loans from our taxpayers, on Mexican oil was to put our taxpayers at the end of a very long line of creditors to that oil. Even adding up all the assets and production of Pemex, Mexico does not have enough oil revenue to cover the \$47.5 billion worth of new loans.

In fact, the Houston Chronicle reports that Mexico will become a net oil importer by the turn of the century, because it is essentially producing half of the oil it produced a decade ago because of problems inside that oil company.

Now, add to that what Mexico's own officials have said. The Mexican Secretary of the Treasury said, "Our oil resources are not going to be used for guarantees." Well, if they are not, what is backing up the risk to the taxpayers of this country?

And Mexico's Energy Minister was quoted recently, and a direct quote again, "Our oil will not be mortgaged nor will it form any part of any loan guarantee."

Now, maybe the United States Ambassador to Mexico cannot read Spanish, but it is all there in the Mexican newspapers to be read by anyone.

Basically, my friends, by dodging Congress, our people have been sold a bill of goods that have no value by the administration in collaboration with the Government of Mexico. Now our administration is scrambling to make this back-door deal look as legitimate as possible, but the fact remains the so-called collateral that Mexico is putting up for the \$47.5 billion in loans is

worthless and, in fact, experts have estimated the entire worth of Pemex at somewhere perhaps, if we are lucky, about \$24 billion.

So ask yourself when you read the fine print and they say they are going to book sales of oil on the Federal Reserve of New York's books, who is cooking the books? We are not getting barrels of oil. We are getting pledges of collateral that has already been overpledged.

And if you really want to get cynical, and I will end with this statement, is it not interesting that this is not the first time this has happened? But in fact it happened right after the Presidential election of 1988, during that period when they were trying to prop up the value of the Mexican peso. It happened in 1982, and now they devalued the peso right after the Mexican election in 1994.

Let the record speak for itself.

COST-EFFECTIVENESS IN WELFARE REFORM

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 4, 1995, the gentlewoman from California [Ms. WOOLSEY] is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

Ms. WOOLSEY. Mr. Speaker, over \$5 billion in child support goes uncollected every year. This is a national disgrace that is punishing our children and bankrupting our welfare system.

Tonight I am pleased to be joined by many of my Democratic colleagues to call attention to this tragedy and to call on the 104th Congress to make child support collection a top priority as we work to reform the welfare system. Democrats have long recognized that holding both parents responsible for their children is the most cost-effective way to reduce the welfare rolls.

Why then, we ask, is there no mention of child support in the Republican's welfare reform bill? Why then did it take so much prodding to get the Republican leadership to even schedule a hearing on child support collection? Do they not know that getting family child support is one of the best ways to get them off welfare?

Mr. Speaker, I have known for over 25 years just how important child support is in preventing the need for welfare, because in 1968 I was a single working mother with three small children, ages 1, 3, and 5. Although I had a court order, I never received a penny in child support. In order to provide my children with the health care and child care they needed, I was forced to go on welfare to supplement my wages.

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Today, Mr. Speaker, millions of families are forced to go on welfare for the same reason. In fact, 91 percent of first-time welfare recipients cite lack of financial support from a parent as the main reason they are on welfare.

Currently, The Federal Government pays over \$1 billion a year to help almost 1,500 State and local agencies collect child support. This piecemeal approach results in failing State collection rates, some as low as 9 percent. Even more alarming is the fact that once a parent who owes support crosses State lines, as approximately one-third of them do, it becomes all but impossible to enforce collection.

Consequently, Mr. Speaker, less than \$1 for every \$10 owed in interstate child support is collected. When it comes to fixing our child support system, however, the Republican leadership seems content on sticking with the status quo, which means the taxpayers get stuck once again with a billion dollar bill for a system that barely works.

Democrats know that our families can no longer afford business as usual. We know that the failure to collect child support is not a State-by-State problem; it is a national crisis demanding a national solution.

It is time to revolutionize child support; it is time to revolutionize child support payment collection in order to make sure all of our children receive the support they need and deserve. That means strengthening paternity establishment laws, that means tough new penalties for parents who refuse to pay support, that means establishing a national registry of child support orders so we can track parents across State lines, and that means taking a serious look at proposals to increase interstate collection, including legislation to federalize the child support system.

Mr. Speaker, I welcome the Republican leadership's late arrival to the child support reform debate. Child support collection after all should not be an issue along party lines. Democrats, however, do not want minor changes to the system or tinkering around the edges; we want fundamental changes.

Mr. Speaker, in the United States if we had had a child support system in place like the ones Democrats have proposed, I might not have needed to go on welfare in the first place. Now we have the opportunity to make sure all families in situations like mine are not forced to go on welfare because they do not receive the support they need and deserve.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to gentlewoman from Florida [Mrs. THURMAN].

Mrs. THURMAN. I thank the gentlewoman from California and certainly appreciate her efforts tonight in bringing a very important issue, important not only to Congress but to the debate that has been taking place in our State legislatures, has been taking place in all of the legislatures across this country. I can assure you that my district offices who generally deal with these issues on an everyday basis, this is one of the No. 1 issues we deal with in trying to help single parents find or restore back child enforcement or child support payments because of the concern that they have for their children.

If you allow me, I would like to take some time and read a statement that I have talking about what I see as some of the issues with some background and what I think we might be able to do, some things we might be able to do to help.

Mr. Speaker, the Child Support Enforcement Program as it exists today appears to be dysfunctional. Caseloads are impossibly high and Federal requirements for providing services to interested parties may be conflicting, counterproductive, and unrealistic. Portions of the program may even present the intended recipients with economic disincentives to cooperate. Meanwhile, birth and family separation statistics indicate a growing number of potential clients.

The statistics are staggering. One in four American families with children today are headed by women. In these single-parent families, the future of these children are directly linked to that of their mothers. Low standards of living are often the result of the high expense of raising children, lower salaries typically earned by women, and insufficient or nonexistent child support payments. Poor enforcement of child support orders greatly worsens the plight of these vulnerable children.

Even though there are efforts to strengthen child support enforcement, the current system has failed to ensure that children receive financial support from both parents. Repeated reports have shown that the potential for child support is approximately \$48 billion per year. However, only \$14 billion is actually paid.

For these reasons, a critical part of reforming the welfare system is improving this country's child support enforcement system. Improvements in the child support system will ensure that children can count on support from both parents and that the cost of public benefits can be reduced while working mothers' real income is raised.

A tough stance must be taken on nonpayment of child support. There are at least four areas that must be addressed. First, efforts to enhance noncustodial parent location and identification must be strengthened. Second, the process by which child support orders are established must be improved. Third, efforts to establish hospital-based paternity must be enforced. And fourth, child support enforcement must be made real by the passage of punitive measures for deadbeat parents.

Noncustodial parent location and identification would be enhanced by having States maintain registries of child support orders. Moreover, the functions of the parent locator in the Department of Health and Human Services should be expanded. The interstate locator should be designated to link State-to-State child support order registers into an automated central system.

Hospital-based paternity should be established by ensuring that States

have simple civil consent procedures for paternity establishment available at hospitals at the time of birth.

Moreover, benefits should be made contingent on paternity establishment. At this time, there is no reciprocal obligation for welfare recipients to help the Government locate the absent parent. The burden of certain parent locator information should be shifted to the applicant of welfare benefits. Of course, certain situations are unique and need to be taken into account, as when the parent cannot be found or if the mother fears harm to herself or her child.

These measures are not meant to be punitive but just responsible. Parents who willfully and fully comply with paternity establishment requirements should not be denied benefits. Nor should they be denied benefits if the State has not met its responsibilities and obligations in assisting with paternity establishment.

Finally, uncompromising punitive measures for deadbeat dads should be fully enforced. This should be done by withholding income from deadbeat dads for child support orders. We must establish procedures so that liens can be imposed against insurance settlements, gambling and lottery winnings, and other awards. Noncompliant fathers, who are delinquent in their support payments, should be required to enter a work program in which they work to pay off benefits meant to support their children.

Mr. Speaker, studies have proven it is not the inability to pay, but rather the refusal to pay that has plunged children into the depths of poverty. Most noncustodial parents are able-bodied and can contribute to the financial support of their children. Simply put, they do not pay because they know they can get away without paying. I offer my ideas as a tough yet fair approach in dealing with a problem that is keeping billions of dollars from children in our country.

I say again to the gentlewoman from California [Ms. WOOLSEY] that we appreciate her bringing this to our attention, and I think all the ideas that will be discussed will open up a debate that is necessary.

Ms. WOOLSEY. I thank the gentlewoman for her contribution, and I yield to the gentlewoman from Missouri [Ms. MCCARTHY].

Ms. MCCARTHY. I thank the gentlewoman for yielding to me.

Mr. Speaker, I rise as a member of the Welfare Reform Task Force to discuss the serious problem of child support enforcement in this country and to note the absence of meaningful child support enforcement provisions in the Personal Responsibility Act.

Mr. Speaker, every child has two parents. Raising a child is the obligation of both these parents. Unfortunately, in my own State of Missouri many parents are not meeting their financial obligations. According to Missouri's Division of Child Support Enforcement,

\$963 million is owed by noncustodial parents to over 500,000 children.

Because of these shocking figures, last year our State enacted reform legislation that stiffened compliance procedures for child support payments. I was proud to be a part the effort in Missouri to see these much-needed reforms enacted. It is my hope that many of these programs, such as the Parents Fair Share Program and the Savings Connection Program can be duplicated at the Federal level.

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What is important to remember is that the failure of parents to make child support payments places children at risk. When child support payments are irregular or missed, the incidence of child poverty increases significantly. According to the Association for Children for Enforcement of Support, 50 percent of all white children growing up in a single parent household who do not receive support live at or below the poverty line, and 70 percent of all African American children growing up in a single parent family live at or below poverty level.

For these reasons, Mr. Speaker, we at the Federal level have to take stronger action to ensure that parents meet their financial obligations to their children. While I am encouraged that the Family Reinforcement Act adds some provisions to strengthen child support orders, I do believe that stronger provisions need to be added during consideration of the bill. In fact, I believe attention should be given to the provisions in the bill introduced by the gentlewoman from Connecticut [Mrs. KENNELLY], which I am cosponsoring, which would deny Federal benefits to individuals owing child support and withhold business and drivers licenses from individuals owing child support. In addition, I will offer consideration of the State reform provisions enacted in Missouri and other States.

Mr. Speaker, this is not a partisan issue. I believe there is broad agreement that more needs to be done to ensure that child support payments are made. While we cannot force parents to spend time with their children, we certainly can place strict enforcement requirements on those mothers and fathers who abandon their children and fail to meet their financial obligations.

Mr. Speaker, I intend to work hard with the gentlewoman from California [Ms. WOOLSEY] and others to achieve bipartisan support to enact strong child support enforcement legislation this session.

Ms. WOOLSEY. Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentlewoman from New York [Mrs. MALONEY].

Mrs. MALONEY. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman from California [Ms. Woolsey] for organizing this special order and for her hard work on the welfare reform task force of the Democratic Party and the Child Enforcement Act along with the gentle-

woman from Connecticut [Mrs. KENNELLY].

Mr. Speaker, everyone knows that raising a child is the responsibility of both parents, so it is a national disgrace that we collect only 18 percent of all child support cases. Everyone knows that establishing paternity will increase accountability. So it is unacceptable that we identify only 18 percent of the AFDC children without a legal father. Everyone knows that increasing child support collection is very doable, so it is simply wrong that we collect only \$14 billion out of a potential \$48 billion every year. That is a \$34 billion gap that could be collected and be part of the Federal Treasury.

Mr. Speaker, enforcing comprehensive child support should be high priority of Congress. We can and should expand the penalties for child support delinquency. We can and should simplify the procedures for establishing paternity. We can and should set up a national registry of child support orders. We can and should institute more performance-based incentives.

However, Mr. Speaker, I have looked, and I cannot find these provisions in the Contract With America.

Mr. Speaker, any welfare reform should also have reforms for child support enforcement. Improving the current child support systems is not only cost effective, but it will also enable many families to avoid welfare. Penalties such as denying professional, recreational, and drivers licenses to a delinquent deadbeat parent will cut down on teenage pregnancies and help increase enforcement. Penalties such as enforcing liens on real property and reporting delinquency to credit bureaus will send a strong message about responsibility. When these penalties are adequately enforced, a deadbeat parent will think twice about avoiding payments.

Those who are hurt most by deadbeat dads are our children. They are our most vulnerable citizens. They cannot vote, cannot speak for themselves, cannot spend millions of dollars lobbying Congress, yet one in every five children is poor. Even worse, one out of every two children in female-headed households are poor. These children need child support payments to literally put food into their mouths, yet time after time these same children receive little or no support from their deadbeat parent. This financial abandonment creates untold hardships for our children and for the American public.

Child poverty has been linked to higher education and medical costs and to increased crime rates. According to the Children's Defense Fund, child poverty costs this Nation between \$36 billion and \$177 billion in reduced future worker productivity and employment. The deadbeat parent who has not paid their child support has not only neglected their legal responsibility to their child, but has also neglected their responsibility to their country.

We all know that the present child support system is in shambles. For many single parent families child support payments are irregular, late, missed, and often not paid at all. Those who do receive payments find them wholly inadequate. The average child support payment for a poor woman is only \$5 per day. That is not even enough for a family meal at McDonald's. No wonder so many children are living in poverty.

Every day single parents struggle to provide needed food, clothing, shelter, and health care. Why should children be punished for the sins of their deadbeat parent? Why should the American public foot the bill for the irresponsible parent?

Already 17.6 million children live in single-parent homes. As more and more children live in single-parent homes, the need for stronger child support enforcement will only get worse.

Child support programs more than pay for themselves. For every \$1 spent, \$4 more are collected.

Child support instills responsibility. Child support prevents welfare. Child support raises children from poverty. Mr. Speaker, what are we waiting for? Let us address this issue now. Our country and our children deserve nothing less, and again I ask you to include this in the welfare reform package.

Ms. WOOLSEY. Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Virginia [Mr. SCOTT].

Mr. SCOTT. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman from California [Ms. WOOLSEY] for her hard work and leadership on welfare reform and child support enforcement in particular.

Mr. Speaker, we all recognize that a child deserves the emotional support of both parents. Today, with close to 6 million children living in poverty, it is clear that children are in desperate need of financial support from both parents. The discussion on children in single-parent families has been primarily focused on welfare reform, specifically Aid to Families with Dependent Children. However, the issue of child support enforcement has curiously been absent in most of the discussion on family preservation and family support.

It has been reported that there is over \$34 billion in uncollected child support payments. In fact, child support orders are established in only about half of children—for half of children who should receive them. And even for those who have support orders, only have receive the full payment. According to the Children's Defense Fund,

The vast majority of children served by state child support enforcement agencies not only do not have full collections made on their behalf, but fail to have any collection made at all.

An estimated \$7.4 billion of uncollected child support should go to poor children. In many, many cases, it is the lack of child support that forces families to go on to welfare to begin with.

Consider this, Mr. Speaker: With a child support payment and even a minimum wage job coupled with earned income tax credit and food stamps, that together could put a family on to the path of self-sufficiency. If we address the support services such as child care, health care, and transportation through welfare reform, the family can be self-sufficient. This has all the components of a plan that accomplishes the goal of lifting families out of poverty: work and responsibility.

In my State of Virginia, Mr. Speaker, we have implemented a strategy to aggressively go after noncustodial parents who choose to ignore their financial responsibility to their children. We have created a system to increase paternity establishment including providing in-hospital paternity acknowledgment, and we have decided that establishment of support orders will be a priority. Virginia is now considered a national model for this system of paternity establishment, and we have collected over \$230 million in child support, including \$40 million which was collected on behalf of children in AFDC families.

Much of the uncollected support involved out-of-State parents, so the need for a national cooperation is obvious.

For some families, the receipt of a steady support payment is enough to lift children out of poverty or prevent them from needing AFDC benefits. A new initiative called: A child support assurance system accomplishes this task. Child support assurance guarantees a fixed amount of child support for each child as long as a child support order is in place.

Whatever the noncustodial parents pays goes toward that guarantee, so if the parent pays all of what is owed, there is only a little administrative expense. If only part is paid, the cost of the guarantee is probably less than AFDC would have been anyway.

Child support assurance removes the work disincentives that we so often hear about from welfare recipients. In a child support assurance system, the family receives the entire guarantee and does not have to worry about a reduction in their take home pay if they work. For example with a \$250 guarantee, if you stay at home you receive \$250. But if you work part time, make \$300 a month you still get the entire \$250 plus your earnings. If you work full time, you still get the entire \$250 and get to keep your earnings. In fact, when you add in the earned income tax credit and the monthly child support assurance payment, work will always pay. Child support assurance demonstrations report that recipients are able to increase their work hours by 25 percent and increase their earnings by 25 percent. Without the child support assurance, many families will probably turn to welfare as a means of support.

Clearly, programs designed to lift children out of poverty must acknowledge that both parents have an obliga-

tion to support their children. Child support systems formalize this arrangement—when we aggressively pursue the noncustodial parent. A system of child support assurance not only recognizes the importance of this arrangement, but makes it easier for families to find their own way on the path to self-sufficiency.

As we consider welfare reform, Mr. Speaker, in conclusion, we must consider child support enforcement and innovations such as child support assurance. We can lift more families out of poverty and fulfill our goal of encouraging work and responsibility.

Ms. WOOLSEY. Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Massachusetts [Mr. NEAL], with whom I cochair the Democratic welfare task force.

Mr. NEAL. Mr. Speaker, today is day 29 of the Contract With America. We have passed the quarter mark for the first 100 days. Until day 27, we heard nothing about child support being included in the contract.

Why was child support not included in the contract? How could such an important issue be ignored? I have carefully reviewed the Personal Responsibility Act and it includes no child support provisions.

On day 27, we heard that the Republicans will include child support enforcement provisions in the Personal Responsibility Act. We had to wait until day 27. Where were the child support provisions?

It is day 29 of the Contract With America. It is time for us to start talking about the details of child support enforcement. This will send the American people the message that we are serious about welfare reform. A tough child support system requires both parents to live up to their responsibilities.

How could we have welfare reform without child support enforcement provision? Child support is welfare prevention. For every \$1 spent on administrative expenses, \$4 is collected in child support. Paying child support is also the ultimate measure of personal responsibility.

The potential for child support collection is estimated at \$48 billion per year. Only \$14 billion is actually paid. This leaves an estimated collection gap of about \$34 billion. This gap needs to be closed. Yet it was not until day 27 that the Republicans decided to address the issue of closing this \$34 billion gap.

One in four children now lives in single parent homes. Without better child support enforcement, too many of these children will not have the support they need and deserve. In 1992, 17.6 million children lived in single parent homes. We need to improve these statistics now.

My home State of Massachusetts has been very successful with child support enforcement and would serve as a role model for the rest of the country. Massachusetts has increased its child support collection rate from 51 to 67 percent over a 3-year period. But Massa-

chusetts is only one State, we must make an improvement on the Federal level.

Child support is one area in which State flexibility is not needed. States should be uniform on this issue. We should be able to collect child support awards across State lines.

Successful child support enforcement includes streamlining the paternity-establishment process. We should give States performance-based incentives for improving paternity-establishment rates.

Out-of-wedlock births have increased at an outrageous rate. In 1991, approximately 30 percent of all children born were born to unwed mothers. These children need to be given a fighting chance. Remember, there is no such thing as an illegitimate baby.

We need to collect awards that we owed. We need States to establish a central registry and centralized collection and disbursement capability.

We need to establish a national commission to study State guidelines and the desirability of uniform national guidelines.

We need to ensure fair award levels. Awards are generally set too low. If awards were modified to current guidelines, an additional \$7.3 billion—22 percent of the gap—could be saved.

It is day 29 of the contract. Child support is finally starting to receive the recognition it deserves. Let's not stop now. We have to work together to close this \$34 billion gap. Paying your child support is the ultimate measure of personal responsibility.

Ms. WOOLSEY. Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from New York [Mr. OWENS].

Mr. OWENS. Mr. Speaker, I will just take 2 minutes to associate myself with the remarks that have been made before.

We are all in favor of welfare reform. We are all in favor of reforming any aspect of Government that certainly will save money and improve efficiency. There is no program in Government anywhere that could not benefit from reform, including the CIA and the aircraft procurement program that is going to purchase the F-22, spending billions of dollars. There are numerous programs that ought to be reformed, and welfare is certainly no exception.

The problem is, we do not want to have reform be merely a persecution of poor children and poor women. The fact that the majority party has chosen to trivialize child support enforcement and not deal with it up to now is shocking. I hope it will no longer be a partisan issue, that they will really get on board, and child support enforcement will become a major part of this reform process.

Let us have welfare reform, but let us do it thoroughly. Let us deal with the provision of jobs and job training for welfare mothers. Let us deal with the child support enforcement. Billions of dollars are at stake here. We have heard the citing of the kind of money

that can be recovered, and there are simple steps that can be taken. The question is why have we waited so long. Why have all these decades gone by, and we have not gone out to collect the kind of money that should be collected from absent parents.

Let us get on board now and have thorough and complete welfare reform.

Ms. WOOLSEY. Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentlewoman from Connecticut [Mrs. KENNELLY].

Mrs. KENNELLY. I thank the gentlewoman for yielding.

Mr. Speaker, when parents evade their responsibilities, children suffer—and the taxpayers often get left with the bill.

To protect both children and taxpayers from the consequences of parental irresponsibility, we need to improve our child support enforcement system. We need to send a clear and unmistakable message: Both parents must provide for their children.

So today, I rise in strong support of bipartisan legislation introduced today by the Congressional Women's Caucus—legislation that will improve almost every aspect of our current child support enforcement system.

The Child Support Responsibility Act would extend much-needed help to custodial parents who, despite time-consuming, often expensive efforts, are still not able to enforce their child support orders across State lines.

Interstate cases account for about one-third of all child support awards. Because of differences in State law regarding enforcement, jurisdiction, and service of process, such cases are often among the most difficult. In fact, the General Accounting Office has reported, that 34 percent of mothers in interstate cases reported that they had never received a support payment in 1989. The figure for mothers in intrastate cases is just 19 percent.

Beyond that, the Office of Child Support Enforcement reports that interstate cases represent nearly one-third of IV-D child support cases with collections, but yield only 8 percent of collected support.

Mr. Speaker, we can do better. We can act on the recommendations of the U.S. Commission on Child Support Enforcement, take a comprehensive approach to solving these problems, and pass the Child Support Responsibility Act.

This bill would establish a central registry in each State of all child support orders issued in the State. It would make uniform the law governing the interaction among States in child support matters. It would set up a national registry of child support orders to assist States in locating absent parents and enforcing orders. And it would expand the penalties for delinquency.

Mr. Speaker, I know there are some who would rather not talk about this matter. They say you don't understand, I have reasons for not paying. But I would say to my colleagues, consider the plight undergone by the cus-

tomodial parent and by the children when these child support payments are not made—and when there seems to be nowhere to turn.

Let me close with one last point.

All of us have heard the calls through the Halls of Congress for young mothers to be more responsible in regard to welfare reform. I completely agree. Shouldn't we also demand, equally loudly and clearly, that fathers be responsible.

Separation happens. Divorce happens. It's a fact of life. But the responsibility assumed by having a child continues. It is not temporary; it is permanent; it should not be easy to evade; and the children should not be left to bear the consequences.

There is a \$34 billion child support enforcement gap. If we don't work harder to collect that money, millions of children will go without the support they deserve. In many cases, the taxpayers will have to pick up the bill for an absentee parent.

Let's put that responsibility back where it belongs. Let's ensure that parents—both custodial and noncustodial—live up to their responsibilities. And let's make sure our children get the support they need and deserve.

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Ms. WOOLSEY. Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentlewoman from Texas [Ms. JACKSON-LEE].

Ms. JACKSON-LEE. Mr. Speaker, somewhere in a school in Houston sits a child by the name of Mary. A teacher writes on the blackboard the word h-o-p-e. Ask Mary what does that word mean. Mary looks and looks again and the teacher points to the word h-o-p-e.

And Mary says to the teacher, "nothing, ma'am, nothing for me."

I say, Mr. Speaker, we should give young Mary hope, hope of survival, hope of being able to survive with a single parent, hope of being able to make it and to be successful. I think, Mr. Speaker, we can begin to give Mary hope by reforming our welfare system as one of the biggest challenges before Congress today. But I really think that we can reform the welfare system by doing comprehensive reform. And that includes child support enforcement.

Mr. Speaker, reforming our welfare system is one of the biggest challenges before the Congress today. I am here this evening to emphasize the point that real welfare reform is comprehensive reform—and this includes child support enforcement.

Unpaid child support hurts families across the Nation every day. Today, 63 percent of absent parents contribute no child support. Shockingly, it is estimated that the potential for child support collections is approximately \$48 billion a year. However, only \$14 billion is actually paid, leaving a collection gap of \$34 billion.

Mr. Speaker, there are many obvious steps that this Congress can take to bring in some of this uncollected child support. First, we can begin by provid-

ing adequate funding for the National Child Support Enforcement Collection Agency so that they can enhance coordination for collections across State lines and improve Federal tracking of delinquent orders.

In addition, a comprehensive child support strategy is necessary to help custodial parents escape welfare and stay in the work force. A comprehensive child support strategy needs stronger requirements for paternity establishment. We need tough new penalties for those who refuse to pay, such as: wage withholding, suspension of drivers' and professional licenses, and property seizures.

Congress should also require all States to adopt the Uniform Interstate Family Support Act. My State of Texas was the second State to adopt UIFSA. The crux of UIFSA is "one order—one State" and it gives States the ability to serve wage withholding orders directly on an employer in another State.

States currently receive 66 percent Federal financial participation matching funds plus incentives for AFDC and some non-AFDC collections. This funding scheme hurts States like Texas because we have a low AFDC grant. We would like to see a higher Federal participation and more incentives in the form of increased funding for meeting certain performance goals. Bottom line—the program is currently underfunded both at the State and Federal level and cannot keep up with the growing caseload. Texas currently uses the States share of AFDC that we recover from absent parents as the State portion of the Federal funding scheme. Since the average welfare grant in Texas is \$174 and in California it is \$400, Texas recovers less and has less to use to pull down Federal dollars and therefore is less able to help families move off of welfare.

Mr. Speaker, child support is one of the real engines of welfare reform, as it requires parents to take financial responsibility for their children. As this Congress tackles the problem of welfare reform and works to move our families toward self-sufficiency and independence, let us be certain to include child support as an important component of this endeavor.

As this Congress tackles the problem of welfare reform and works to move families toward self-sufficiency and independence, let us again give little Mary hope. Let us be certain to include the child as an important component of this endeavor. Let us remember that child enforcement must be part of welfare reform.

Ms. WOOLSEY. Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Massachusetts [Mr. MEEHAN].

Mr. MEEHAN. Mr. Speaker, I congratulate my colleague, the gentlewoman from California [Ms. WOOLSEY], for this opportunity to speak on such an important issue and compliment her in putting this together.

I want to refer to the experience that I had before I was elected to the Congress 2 years ago. I was the first assistant district attorney in Middlesex County, which is the largest county in Massachusetts. And in that position, I had an opportunity to look at the child support enforcement in Massachusetts and a person from the State revenue department came into my office and asked me to make that a priority within the district attorney's office. There had been a new statute that had been passed in Massachusetts for tougher, stricter enforcement, but a case had never been tried, a criminal case under that statute.

And I looked at the case of a person from Lowell, MA, someone by the name of Edward Orlando, who had gotten a divorce from his wife. And he had moved out and he moved to New York City where he set up an apartment with his girlfriend. And they lived on 52d street. And at the same time they lived in that very expensive section of New York City, he had a place in the Caribbean as well. The only problem is, Mr. Orlando left 11 children back in Massachusetts, 6 of whom were still living at home in Lowell.

Audrey Orlando faced some very difficult choices. She did not receive a single child support payment for over a year. By the time several years had gone by, Edward Orlando owed his wife \$47,000 in back child support. The bank was foreclosing on the mortgage of that home on Billings Street in Lowell. Audrey Orlando was unable to collect the money, facing foreclosure because of a system that was broken down and could not work.

□ 1940

People who are not paying child support are able to go to other States and use the statutes against each other, pit one State against another, so the child enforcement officials are unable to collect that money.

I took that case in the DA's office and told Mrs. Orlando I would make it a priority. I was able to use the long-arm statute to reach out and find this defendant in New York. We brought him back to Massachusetts, but not before he was detained at Riker's Island for about a month as we set up to bring him back to Massachusetts.

This defendant was stunned that any prosecutor from anywhere would bring him back or hold him and detain him at Riker's Island, like a common criminal, \$47,000 in back support. We brought him back to Massachusetts, where he stood trial.

I decided to make this case a priority. I personally prosecuted the case. The evidence was overwhelming. Although on paper Mr. Orlando, did not have any money, we found that his lifestyle was such that the evidence was overwhelming that he in fact was not meeting his legal and moral obligation.

After we finished the conclusion of the evidence and the conclusion of the final arguments, Mr. Orlando got up

and pleaded guilty. He was sent to jail for 3 months, 3 months sentence, and was ordered to pay the child support.

Guess what happened after the 3 months? Mr. Orlando skipped out and still has not paid the child support. I still have in my office the case of Mrs. Orlando, trying to avoid being foreclosed on her home.

She is like thousands of other women across America who are stereotyped in some ways about being a welfare mother, because for a period of time she had to go on welfare. She works two jobs, 7 days a week, to try to keep those foreclosing on her home from kicking her and her family out of her home.

This case illustrates the problem that we have. We need a Federal system. If a person is convicted of a speeding ticket in one community or one State and goes to another State, we have a computer system to catch that person. It is unconscionable that we do not have a way to force people to pay child support.

There is a legal and moral responsibility here. Child support is not the residue of a bad marriage, it is an obligation that is legal and moral.

I might add, Mr. Speaker, in closing, 90 percent, by the way, of the money, of the \$38 billion that is owed in this country in child support, are men who owe women. I can't help but believe that a court system all across America dominated by male judges and male personnel, and a Congress, frankly, that is dominated by males, I can't help but think if 90 percent of the money owed were women who owed men, the system would have found a way to find a way to collect this money.

I thank the gentlewoman for yielding, and I hope that together this year we can finally set up a Federal system to make people meet their moral and legal obligation.

Ms. WOOLSEY. I yield to the gentleman from South Carolina [JIM CLYBURN].

Mr. CLYBURN. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman for yielding to me.

Mr. Speaker, I rise this evening to address the important issue of child support enforcement. There can be no denying that there is a problem. It is estimated that each year over \$34 billion of child support goes uncollected. My own State of South Carolina has a collection rate of just 24 percent of court-ordered child support payments. But there is more to the problem than an inability to collect payments.

For the many children whose paternity has not been established there can be no child support order. And in the relatively few cases where there is a court order, child support payments are rarely adjusted for inflation, and the amount averages less than \$3,000 a year.

Each year only \$14 billion of the estimated \$48 billion owed in child support is collected. The \$34 billion left uncollected is the difference between financial independence and living in poverty

or on welfare for many single parent families.

In 1990, women headed 86 percent of the single parent families in this country, and single parent families headed by women are seven times as likely to live in poverty. Of the single parent families headed by women in 1990, almost 36 percent received some sort of governmental assistance.

The statistics make it clear. Ensuring the full collection of reasonable child support payments is one of the most effective means to prevent many of our Nation's children from living in poverty. Child support payments could enable many single parent families to leave welfare or prevent them from entering the system in the first place.

Yet, there is absolutely no mention of child support enforcement in the welfare reform bill included by the Republicans in their so called Contract With America. The Republicans claim that their bill will end dependency on welfare, eliminate out of wedlock births, and eradicate teenage pregnancy. They boast their bill will do all this, yet it leaves untapped the \$34 billion of uncollected child support each year.

According to the Republican bill H.R. 4, children born to unwed mothers under the age of 18, or 21 if the State so desires, will be permanently ineligible for welfare benefits. According to H.R. 4, benefits will also be denied to children whose paternity has not been established or who were conceived by or born to mothers while they were receiving welfare.

Yet, while the Republican bill includes numerous provisions to exclude certain mothers and their children from receiving benefits, there are no provisions to crack down on deadbeat dads. The Republicans choose to focus on the failings of teenage mothers trying to raise their children on their own while making no attempt to punish fathers for abandoning their children. Mr. Speaker, it takes two.

What kind of family values would our Government promote if it were to deny aid to children born to unwed teenage mothers while allowing a father to shirk his obligations as proposed by the Republicans? What kind of mixed message would we send to our teenagers that a teenage mother will be forced to live in poverty without any assistance as she struggles to raise her child while the father bears none of the burden?

It is high time that we reformed child support enforcement in this country. Fathers must be identified, reasonable child support orders must be established, and child support payments must be collected.

Ms. WOOLSEY. I yield to the gentleman from Tennessee, Mr. HAROLD FORD, who is the ranking member of the Subcommittee on Human Resources of the Committee on Ways and Means.

(Mr. FORD asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. FORD. Mr. Speaker, I rise and thank the gentlewoman from California [Ms. WOOLSEY] for requesting these special orders tonight on child support enforcement, and commend her for her leadership here in the Congress, and also for cochairing the Task Force on Welfare Reform.

Mr. Speaker, I was disturbed to read the other day what the Associated Press article is showing from the National Center for Children in Poverty. Six million children under the age of 6 were found to live in poverty in 1992.

I certainly would like to say to my colleagues, those of us who serve on the Subcommittee on Human Resources of the Committee on Ways and Means, the Personal Responsibility Act that excluded child support enforcement, we applaud and commend the chairman, CLAY SHAW, for now saying that he will include child support enforcement. But women in this Congress, both Democrats and Republicans alike, are making sure that we respond to this component of the welfare reform package.

Emphasis should be placed on reducing poverty by keeping families together, enforcing child support obligations, as well as promoting self-sufficiency, assisting with day care and transportation, and providing education, training, and work incentives that are needed.

Ignoring child support enforcement sends the wrong message in America. It says that a noncustodial parent who is one-half responsible for the birth of a child does not have any responsibility for that child at all. That is wrong, and hopefully we in the Committee on Ways and Means, and my colleagues in this House, will make sure that we join with the Governors of this Nation and say that a strong child support enforcement component of the welfare reform package will in fact be a part of this bill that we will bring to the Congress, hopefully in the first 100 days.

Ms. WOOLSEY. I yield to the gentleman from New York [Mr. NADLER].

□ 1950

CHILD SUPPORT ENFORCEMENT

Mr. NADLER. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my colleague Representative LYNN WOOLSEY for organizing this special order to bring attention to the urgency and severity of the crisis of the noncollection of child support.

Mr. Speaker, before I came to this House I had considerable experience in this area. I am proud to have been the author during my 16 years in the New York State Assembly of 22 State laws that strengthened child support enforcement methods and of being a prime sponsor of the Child Support Standards Act which established guidelines for setting support awards. We enacted laws providing for interception of State income tax refunds, of stock divi-

dend payments, and interest payments owed to defaulting parents. We mandated withholding child support automatically from the obligated payer's salary as soon as the support order was issued. We mandated child support defaults being included in all credit reports. We authorized the State to use every conceivable method to collect support owed on behalf of the custodial parents.

Still we failed. We increased collection rates substantially, but they were still woefully inadequate. Why?

Mostly for two reasons. First, establishing paternity was still very difficult. Second, because when obligated parents went to another State, as 30 percent do nationally, all our collection methods went out the window, and we had to resort to the very weak interstate enforcement system.

Clearly we need a national enforcement system that will strengthen the paternity establishment system and will put in place a uniform national child support collection system.

The Internal Revenue Service should be given the job of collecting child support and should be mandated to use all the force and powers it uses to collect taxes to collect child support.

Let the Federal Government set uniform minimum child support standards. Let the Federal Government pay every custodial parent a basic child support benefit and then reimburse itself by collecting the money owed from the obligated parents. In this way we would put the obligation on the Government, not on the custodial parent, to chase after the noncustodial parent to collect the funds to reimburse itself. And the child, the children, would have assured support.

One thing should be made clear. This is not primarily a problem of the poor. Although mothers and children are often rendered poor by noncollection of support due, we are more often than not talking about middle class or even wealthy families.

Make no mistake. Without seriously addressing the collection of child support, there can be no real welfare reform.

That is why it is so shocking that the so-called Personal Responsibility Act barely deals with child support and seeks instead to punish poor mothers. Welfare reform must begin with child support enforcement measures. That would save the taxpayers money, make the lives of children and custodial parents much easier and teach the lesson that fathers too have responsibilities. Then we can reform the welfare system to deal with the much smaller problem that would then remain.

Mr. Speaker, I call on this Congress to take on the challenge of making child support orders real and enforced and so to improve the lives of millions of our children.

Again, I thank Congresswoman WOOLSEY for organizing this special order.

Ms. WOOLSEY. Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Puerto Rico [Mr. ROMERO-BARCELÓ].

Mr. ROMERO-BARCELÓ. Mr. Speaker, today I join our colleagues in defense of our children.

For obvious reasons, children are in a defenseless position; they have little if any means by which to improve their standard of living. Since they do not vote, they have no political leverage. Therefore, government has a responsibility to watch over the well-being of children.

How can children have a bright future when they grow up in the darkness, lacking fulfillment of the basic needs so important in human development? How do we expect to have a better future for our Nation if we ignore the needs of our children today? Child support and its enforcement should be a top priority of welfare reform.

Almost everyone today would agree that the welfare system must be revamped and that meaningful reform is in order. Differences in opinion, however, arise on the methods and fine print necessary to achieve real changes that will help those in need to break the cycle of poverty or those who need a second change.

According to the information provided by the National Center for Children in Poverty, more than a quarter of American children under age 6 were living in poverty in 1992, though nearly three in five poor children had working parents. These figures represent a total of 25 percent of the population in that age group.

As the representative of 3.7 million U.S. citizens in Puerto Rico which has some of the highest poverty statistics in the country, I know the urgency of a comprehensive child support strategy.

The Child Support Program records show that over \$34 billion in accumulated unpaid support was due to over 16 million children in the United States at the end of 1989. The collection rate was 19 percent of the total amount due in Child Support cases. Unfortunately, the system fails to ensure that children receive adequate support from both parents. For most children born out of wedlock, a child support order is never awarded. Also, of all the child support orders, the full amount of child support is collected in only about one out of every two cases.

Single parent families struggle every day to provide needed food, clothing, shelter and health care for their children. When child support payments are irregular, missed, or not paid at all, the incidence of child poverty drastically increases.

Fifty percent of all white children growing up in single parent households who do not receive child support live at or below the poverty level;

Sixty percent of all hispanic children growing up in single parent households live at or below poverty levels;

Seventy percent of all African-American children growing up in single parent families live at or below the poverty level. Surely these figures demonstrate that decisive action is needed.

There are many things we can do to improve and enhance the current child support system. For example, we can require uniform procedures for dealing with interstate cases, which are currently the most difficult to pursue. We can improve tracking of delinquent parents through national reporting of child support orders and by establishing a Federal registry of child support orders.

Moreover, we need tough new penalties for those who refuse to pay, such as authorizing withholding part of wages and allow suspension of professional, occupational, and even drivers' licenses as a means of forcing the delinquent parent to comply with support payment orders.

If we do not take action on child support now, we will be requiring young mothers to be responsible, while we give fathers an exemption. The Personal Responsibility Act, H.R. 4, cuts young, single mothers from welfare, but it does nothing to improve child support enforcement.

By ignoring child support enforcement we are sending the wrong message. It says that the noncustodial parent who is 50 percent responsible for the child does not have any real responsibility to support his child. If more noncustodial parents are made to pay child support, welfare will not be necessary for many families.

Sensitivity has always been a characteristic of the American experience. In good times and bad, we have been a caring nation that values responsibilities to continue this tradition and make sure that children in America are protected.

Mr. HOYER. Mr. Speaker, America is experiencing a serious problem: Too many working and able-bodied parents are not taking responsibility for their children. The time has come to declare war on our current welfare system so that we can properly address the situation.

In every war, battles must be fought and won. One of the biggest battles we must fight is improving and reforming this Nation's child support enforcement problem.

The reasons for engaging in this battle are clear: 63 percent of the absent parents in this country do not pay child support. Approximately \$35 billion is lost each year in uncollected child support payments. And in my own State of Maryland, absent parents defaulted on more than \$325 million in court-ordered child support in 1993. Most importantly, we all must remember—the children suffer when child support is not paid.

As a nation and as a society we cannot afford a social safety net without expecting obligations and demanding responsibilities. For any type of welfare reform to be successful, individuals must accept the responsibility of working and providing for their families. In 1990, absent parents paid only \$14 billion in child support. But if child support reflecting current ability to pay were established and enforced, single parents and their children would

have received almost \$48 billion. This translates into more money for food, shelter, clothing, and child care and a reduction in the Federal burden. We must send a clear signal that both parents who bring children into this world must take responsibility for supporting them.

That is why we need a tough, smart child support program which requires both mothers and fathers to live up to their responsibilities. We must target those individuals who believe they don't have to take care of their kids because their neighbors—hard-working, tax paying, responsible citizens—will. The buck must start and stop with the parents.

The children of this country need the billions in outstanding and uncollected child support. Payment of child support could save this country billions of dollars if we could move people off welfare and keep others from joining the rolls. The financial burden of supporting the children must once and for all shift from the government to the parents. If we can do this, we will be well on our way to winning our first battle in the war on welfare.

Any comprehensive welfare proposal must include child support enforcement. Yet, the Republican Contract With America does not. Are the Republicans saying to the nonpaying parents that they do not have to support their kids? If they are here to promote personal responsibility and do the people's business, this critical area should have been included in the Personal Responsibility Act.

At the urging of Democrats, I am pleased Chairman SHAW has agreed to include this child support enforcement within the Personal Responsibility Act.

Ms. WOOLSEY. Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Massachusetts [Mr. MARKEY].

The SPEAKER pro tempore. (Mr. HASTINGS of Washington). The time of the gentlewoman has expired.

Ms. WOOLSEY. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to extend my time by 3 minutes.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. That request cannot be extended in fairness to others that have had the 60-minute.

Under the rules, a single Member cannot control more than an hour. However, if another Member would like to yield time, that would be appropriate.

COST EFFECTIVENESS IN WELFARE REFORM

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Massachusetts [Mr. MARKEY] is recognized for 2 minutes.

Mr. MARKEY. I thank the Speaker very much, and I thank the Republican leadership who are at this point graciously allowing me to speak out of order.

Mr. Speaker, at this juncture, at the conclusion of the special order, we are invoking Mo Udall's old saying that everything has been said but not everybody has said it.

As we conclude this, I would just like to point out that one out of five children in the United States is poor. Poor. Fifteen million children live in single-parent homes, that is, where there is only one parent, and those children are

five times as likely to be poor as children who live in families that have two parents.

□ 2000

That is a staggeringly large number, millions and millions of children who are in this condition.

Thirty-seven percent of the women who control these households get support from the men who father the children, but over 60 percent of these women get no help from the fathers.

Let me give some statistics. Nationwide each year \$34 billion goes uncollected in child support from fathers, \$34 billion. Contrast that with the total amount of money that every taxpayer in America is asked to contribute to help out these mothers. It is \$23 billion.

So for all of the AFDC mothers and children in America, the total amount of money which is paid is \$23 billion.

The fathers owe \$34 billion. Taxpayers have every right to be outraged. Why should they dip into their pockets to pay for what fathers across this country should be responsible for kicking in every day? I don't think the average taxpayer would mind paying if they felt mothers and fathers actually needed it.

I hope we continue to discuss this subject in the future.

GENERAL LEAVE

Ms. WOOLSEY. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks on the subject of my special order this evening.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. (Mr. HASTINGS of Washington). Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from California?

There was no objection.

PROGRESS ON THE CONTRACT WITH AMERICA

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 4, 1995, the gentleman from Ohio [Mr. HOKE] is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

Mr. HOKE. Mr. Speaker, I am looking forward to this special order that I have asked some of my colleagues to participate in, the gentleman from Ohio [Mr. PORTMAN], the gentleman from North Carolina [Mr. JONES], the gentleman from Georgia [Mr. KINGSTON], and what we want to do this evening is review some of the things we have already done in this Congress, review some of the things that have happened immediately preceding and some of the things that we expect to be doing.

I want to point out first of all that today we took a very important step on the road to recovering the confidence of the American people that began with the election last November. That is because what we did today is